



## Chapter Two

### Sadhana-bhakti: The Practice of Krsna Consciousness

Practice means employing our senses in some particular type of work. Therefore devotional service in practice means utilizing our different sensory organs in service to Krsna. Some of the senses are meant for acquiring knowledge, and some are meant for executing the conclusions of our thinking, feeling and willing. So practice means employing both the mind and the senses in practical devotional service. This practice is not for developing something artificial. For example, a child learns or practices to walk. This walking is not unnatural. The walking capacity is there originally in the child, and simply by a little practice he walks very nicely. Similarly, devotional service to the Supreme Lord is the natural instinct of every living entity. Even uncivilized men like the aborigines offer their respectful obeisances to something wonderful exhibited by nature's law, and they appreciate that behind some wonderful exhibition or action there is something supreme. So this consciousness, though lying dormant in those who are materially contaminated, is found in every living entity. And, when purified, this is called Krsna consciousness.

There are certain prescribed methods for employing our senses and mind in such a way that our dormant consciousness for loving Krsna will be invoked, as much as the child, with a little practice, can begin to walk. One who has no basic walking capacity cannot walk by practice. Similarly, Krsna consciousness cannot be aroused simply by practice. Actually there is no such practice. When we wish to develop our innate capacity for devotional service, there are certain processes which, by our accepting and executing them, will cause that dormant capacity to be invoked. Such practice is called sadhana-bhakti.

Every living entity under the spell of material energy is held to be in an abnormal condition of madness. In Srimad-Bhagavatam it is said, "Generally, the conditioned soul is mad, because he is always engaged in activities which are the causes of bondage and suffering." Spirit soul in his original condition is joyful, blissful, eternal and full of knowledge. Only by his implication in material activities has he become miserable, temporary and full of ignorance. This is due to vikarma. Vikarma means "actions which should not be done." Therefore, we must practice sadhana-bhakti -- which means to offer mangala-arati (Deity worship) in the morning, to refrain from certain material activities, to offer obeisances to the spiritual master and to follow many other rules and regulations which will be discussed here one after another. These practices will help one become cured of madness. As a man's mental disease is cured by the directions of a psychiatrist, so this sadhana-bhakti cures the conditioned soul of his madness under the spell of maya, material illusion.



Narada Muni mentions this sadhana-bhakti in Srimad-Bhagavatam, Seventh Canto, First Chapter, verse 32. He says there to King Yudhisthira, "My dear King, one has to fix his mind on Krsna by any means." That is called Krsna consciousness. It is the duty of the acarya, the spiritual master, to find the ways and means for his disciple to fix his mind on Krsna. That is the beginning of sadhana-bhakti.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu has given us an authorized program for this purpose, centered around the chanting of the Hare Krsna mantra. This chanting has so much power that it immediately attaches one to Krsna. That is the beginning of sadhana-bhakti. Somehow or other, one has to fix his mind on Krsna. The great saint Ambarisa Maharaja, although a responsible king, fixed his mind on Krsna, and similarly anyone who tries to fix his mind in this way will very rapidly make progress in successfully reviving his original Krsna consciousness.

Now this sadhana-bhakti, or practice of devotional service, may also be divided into two parts. The first part is called service according to regulative principles: one has to follow these different regulative principles by the order of the spiritual master or on the strength of authoritative scriptures, and there can be no question of refusal. That is called *vaidhi*, or regulated. One has to do it without argument. Another part of sadhana-bhakti is called *raganuga*. *Raganuga* refers to the point at which, by following the regulative principles, one becomes a little more attached to Krsna and executes devotional service out of natural love. For example, a person engaged in devotional service may be ordered to rise early in the morning and offer arati, which is a form of Deity worship. In the beginning, by the order of his spiritual master, one rises early in the morning and offers arati, but then he develops real attachment. When he gets this attachment, he automatically tries to decorate the Deity and prepare different kinds of dresses and thinks of different plans to execute his devotional service nicely. Although it is within the category of practice, this offering of loving service is spontaneous. So the practice of devotional service, sadhana-bhakti, can be divided into two parts -- namely, regulative and spontaneous.

(Nectar of Devotion pp. 21-23)

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, "Pure love for Krs̄a is eternally established in the hearts of the living entities. It is not something to be gained from another source. When the heart is purified by hearing and chanting, this love naturally awakens. (Cc. Madhya 22.107)



## The Most Basic Rule

We should always try to mold the activities of our lives in such a way that we will constantly remember Visnu, or Krsna. That is Krsna consciousness. Whether one concentrates his mind on the four-handed form of Visnu or on the form of two-handed Krsna, it is the same. The Padma Purana recommends: somehow or other always think of Visnu, without forgetting Him under any circumstances. Actually this is the most basic of all regulative principles. For, when there is an order from a superior about doing something, there is simultaneously a prohibition. When the order is that one should always remember Krsna, the prohibition is that one should never forget Him. Within this simple order and prohibition, all regulative principles are found complete.

This regulative principle is applicable to all varnas and asramas, the castes and occupations of life. There are four varnas, namely the brahmanas (priests and intellectuals), the ksatriyas (warriors and statesmen), the vaisyas (businessmen and farmers) and the sudras (laborers and servants). There are also four standard asramas, namely brahmacarya (student life), grhastha (householder), vanaprastha (retired) and sannyasa (renounced). The regulative principles are not only for the brahmacaris (celibate students) to follow, but are applicable for all. It doesn't matter whether one is a beginner -- a brahmacari -- or is very advanced -- a sannyasi. The principle of remembering the Supreme Personality of Godhead constantly and not forgetting Him at any moment is meant to be followed by everyone without fail.

If this injunction is followed, then all other rules and regulations will automatically fall into line. All other rules and regulations should be treated as assistants or servants to this one basic principle.

(Nectar of Devotion, p. 23, 24)

man-mana bhava mad-bhakto  
mad-yaji mam namaskuru  
mam evaisyasi yuktvaivam  
atmanam mat-parayanah



## TRANSLATION

Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, become My devotee, offer obeisances to Me and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me.  
(Bhagavad gita, 9.34)

## Pancaratrika-vidhi and Bhagavata-vidhi

To chant the holy name of the Lord, one need not depend upon other paraphernalia, for one can immediately get all the desired results of linking with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It may therefore be questioned why there is a necessity for initiation or further spiritual activities in devotional service for one who engages in the chanting of the holy name of the Lord. The answer is that although it is correct that one who fully engages in chanting the holy name need not depend upon the process of initiation, generally a devotee is addicted to many abominable material habits due to material contamination from his previous life. In order to get quick relief from all these contaminations, it is required that one engage in the worship of the Lord in the temple. The worship of the Deity in the temple is essential to reduce one's restlessness due to the contaminations of conditioned life. Thus Narada, in his pancaratrici-vidhi, and other great sages have sometimes stressed that since every conditioned soul has a bodily concept of life aimed at sense enjoyment, to restrict this sense enjoyment the rules and regulations for worshipping the Deity in the temple are essential. Srila Rupa Gosvami has described that the holy name of the Lord can be chanted by liberated souls, but almost all the souls we have to initiate are conditioned. It is advised that one chant the holy name of the Lord without offenses and according to the regulative principles, yet due to their past bad habits they violate these rules and regulations. Thus the regulative principles for worship of the Deity are also simultaneously essential.

(Cc Adi 7.76)

The devotees who have taken shelter of the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu take the responsibility for distributing nectarean devotional service all over the world. They are like clouds pouring water on the ground that nourishes the fruit of love of Godhead in this world. The devotees eat that fruit to their hearts' content, and whatever remnants they leave are eaten by the general populace. Thus they live happily.

(Cc Madhya 25.276)

Especially in this age of Kali, sankirtana alone is sufficient. If the members of our temples in the different parts of the world simply continue sankirtana before the Deity, especially before Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, they will remain perfect. There is no need of any other performances.



Nevertheless, to keep oneself clean in habits and mind, Deity worship and other regulative principles are required. Srila Jiva Gosvami says that although sankirtana is sufficient for the perfection of life, the arcana, or worship of the Deity in the temple, must continue in order that the devotees may stay clean and pure. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura therefore recommended that one follow both processes simultaneously. We strictly follow his principle of performing Deity worship and sankirtana along parallel lines. This we should continue.

Because Krsna is a person and because devotional service is exchanged between persons (the devotee and the Lord), the worship of the Lord's personal form as the Deity is particularly important. In the Bhagavad-gita, Krsna declares that worshiping Him in His personal form is better than meditating in the formless, Impersonal Brahman, and He specifically requests that a worshiper make devotional offerings of water, fruit and vegetables. But since thousands of years have passed since Lord Krsna spoke the Bhagavad-gita and appeared on earth in His original form, we may ask how can we render such intimate service to His personal form today? The answer is that Krsna mercifully consents to appear in His 'arcavigraha' (Deity form) just to facilitate the devotional service of a devotee who cannot yet see the all-spiritual form of the Lord.

Because the devotees in the material world can see only material elements, Krsna kindly appears in wood or metal, and when these elements are wrought in the shape of Lord Krsna as is described in the scriptures, then that Deity form is nondifferent from Krsna. The atheist cannot believe that God can appear in the form of a statue, but neither can he give convincing reasons why he should be unable to do so if He pleases. The scriptures warn, "One should never think of the Deity within the temple as stone or wood, or any other material element". The Deity can act exactly as the Lord does in his original form of Krsna. Devotees who understand the science of Krsna and who behold Him with eyes of love can directly talk with the Deity and Krsna has no difficulty in replying to their prayers or receiving their offerings.

A doubt may be raised whether it is absolutely necessary to worship the Deity. Since the holy name of Krsna, the Hare Krsna mantra, contains the full presence of Lord Krsna, why does a devotee have to undergo the brahminical initiation and particular activities of Deity worship? Isn't chanting enough?

The answer is that chanting is certainly enough, but constant chanting is specially for the liberated soul. Srila Prabhupada writes: 'Even though the chanting of the holy name is sufficient to enable one to progress in spiritual life to the standard of love of Godhead, one is nevertheless susceptible to contamination because of possessing a material body. Consequently, a special stress is given to the 'arcanavidhi'. One should therefore regularly take advantage of both the bhagavata process and the pancharatriki process' (Bhag. 7.5.24). For the conditioned souls of Kali-yuga, Srila Jiva Goswami recommends that Deity worship in the temple be compulsory. Nor did any of the liberated acaryas ever discourage temple worship; rather, they set the example for the masses of people by arranging for the construction of grand temples and installing Deities.



In His Deity form, Krsna becomes malleable and dependent on His devotee's care. The worship must therefore be rendered with enthusiasm and precise attention. The devotee must sew opulent clothes for the Deity, artistically decorate the Deity, clean the temple, perform many aratis daily, cook the best foods available to offer to the Deity, and carry out all the routine activities of Deity worship without fail. Through this meditation and service, the pujari gives up his material desires and enter into a very personal relationship with the Lord. Sometimes he dreams of the Deity, and the Deity makes a particular request. At the time of death if the Deity worshiper remembers and sees before him the personal form of Lord Krsna, he will immediately attain to the eternal devotional service in the spiritual world. (Satsvarupa das Goswami, Vaisnava Behavior pp. 28-31)

## The Four Regulative Principles

Srimad Bhagavatam explains that a peaceful, spiritually progressive culture rests on four pillars of religion: austerity, truthfulness, cleanliness and mercy. These four qualities indicate a state of goodness conducive to spiritual aspiration. Working against the achievement of these qualities, and ultimately making them unattainable are the four degrading activities of gambling, intoxication, illicit sex and meat eating.

The first sinful activity is gambling. Gambling is taken to mean not only betting with money over games or sporting events, but also speculative, dishonest or illicit business dealings. The primary result of such activities is excessive material attachment due to increased greed and avarice. Other results are loss of mental equilibrium because of anxiety, suffering of the participants because of loss and an increase of dishonesty and cheating that destroys the elevating quality of truthfulness.

The gambling propensity extends itself even into the sphere of spiritual life when men want to understand or explain spiritual matters on the strength of their speculative abilities. Instead of hearing from bonafide spiritual authorities they gamble away their spiritual lives.

Intoxication refers to the taking into the body of various chemicals that are not necessary for bodily maintenance and have stimulating or depressive effects on the mind and body.

Under this heading, the Vedic scriptures include everything from tea, coffee and tobacco to liquor and more powerful drugs. These habits generally cause loss of health, resulting eventually in disease, premature aging, and inability to fix the mind intelligently and steadily on any subject. Thus, such habits impede spiritual advancement by binding a person with material attachments and at the same time agitating the mind so that it cannot be fixed in meditation on the self and God.

Illicit sex is any sexual activity outside the marriage, and any sexual activity within marriage unless engaged in for the purpose of begetting children. Unrestrained indulgence in sex,, although a source of great physical pleasure, causes social maladies as well as failure to attain spiritual consciousness.



Illicit sex produces unwanted children, leading to social and economic problems of mammoth dimensions. To avoid such consequences, people use abortion and contraception, both of which practices are defined as murder by scripture, science and common sense. Those responsible for such activities can expect hellish penalties due to the heavy karmic weight of their transgressions of the moral law.

When engaged in for sensual pleasure, sex not only degrades human society but also creates excessive attachment for the body and for the bodily pleasures. For such a selfish person whose consciousnesses so deeply rooted in the body there is no possibility of uncovering and experiencing the blissful nature of the soul.

Meat eating includes the slaughtering or troubling of animal forms of life in order to eat their bodies or eggs.

When there is no other healthy food available, and when the land is unsuitable for agriculture and dairy farming, a human being may be justified in eating animals. Otherwise, the systematic slaughter of animals in order to subsist on their flesh and eggs is the most condemned of sinful activities, resulting in personal and social misery and effectively blocking any attempt at spiritual advancement.

There are several practical reasons for not eating meat. One is that animal slaughter is clearly murder, and anyone who eats the flesh of the victim must share in the bad karma from that murder. A second is that meat eating is physically unhealthy. The saturated fats in most meat contribute to cardiovascular disease, while the toxins in the decomposing flesh may corrode the nervous system and contribute to senility, paissy, or insanity. A third reason applies particularly to those who hope to advance in love of God. In the Bhagavad-gita, Krsna advises that we eat only food that has been offered to Him with love and devotion. Thus our consciousness is purified by our consuming sanctified foodstuffs. Krsna specifically requests that only vegetarian foodstuffs be offered to Him - no meat, fish, or eggs.

These, then, are some of the more salient reasons why gambling, intoxication, illicit sex, and meat eating should be avoided. Each of these activities results in individual suffering and the breakdown of society, and each disqualifies one from experiencing his eternal, blissful spiritual life in Krishna consciousness.

"Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer or give away, and whatever austerities you perform -- do that, O son of Kunti, as an offering to Me."

## PURPORT

Thus, it is the duty of everyone to mold his life in such a way that he will not forget Krsna in any circumstance. Everyone has to work for maintenance of his body and soul together, and Krsna recommends herein that one should work for Him. Everyone has to eat something to live;



therefore he should accept the remnants of foodstuffs offered to Krsna. Any civilized man has to perform some religious ritualistic ceremonies; therefore Krsna recommends, "Do it for Me," and this is called arcana. Everyone has a tendency to give something in charity; Krsna says, "Give it to Me," and this means that all surplus money accumulated should be utilized in furthering the Krsna consciousness movement. Nowadays people are very much inclined to the meditational process, which is not practical in this age, but if anyone practices meditating on Krsna twenty-four hours a day by chanting the Hare Krsna mantra round his beads, he is surely the greatest meditator and the greatest yogi. as substantiated by the Sixth Chapter of Bhagavad-gita.

(Bhagavad gita, 9.27)

## Rules of Cleanliness

### Cleanliness and Other Standards

- 1) Never enter the kitchen or the temple in an unclean state.
- 2) The mouth is a dirty place (being positioned at one end of the intestines, it is a place where many germs are found) and therefore one should not suck one' s fingers or pen, or bite one' s nails, etc. If one does touch one' s mouth then the hands should be washed. Don' t lick things like stamps and don' t blow out candles, incense sticks, etc.  
Also it is a good practice to learn to pour water/juice into your mouth when you drink, then the cup remains clean, not having touched one' s lips.
- 3) If you make a mess clean it up, especially in the toilet or washbasin etc. A place should always be as clean, if not cleaner, after it has been visited by a devotee.
- 4) Your locker should always be neat and clean (Don' t leave prasada in it or even bring prasada to your room).
- 5) When you clean anywhere in the temple building try to make the place as clean as
- 6) Do not leave clothing lying around.
- 7) If someone else leaves a mess then you can clean it up, seeing that in actuality everything is the personal property of the representative of Krsna, the spiritual master. Once Srila Prabhupada inspected one of our many toilets in our Mayapura property and upon finding a cigarette he exclaimed "Who has been smoking in my bathroom?"
- 8) Nails should always be clipped short. This should not be done in one' s bedroom but in the bathroom and the clippings should be flushed away down the toilet or sink, or thrown in the rubbish bin provided.  
Evacuating, nail cutting, teeth brushing, shaving, etc., should be done before showering.
- 9) Take at least two showers a day (or more if you have to pass stool at another time) -- the early morning shower can be cool to help invigorate the system and should be efficient but quick (a warm shower should be taken if one is sick). It is also important to take a "mental bath" by chanting Hare Krsna as one takes one' s physical bath.
- 10) Scrub and file feet whenever necessary (which avoids painful cracks in the heel developing)





- 11) Use the right hand only for eating, chanting rounds, offering and accepting things to and from others, turning on communal switches, opening doors and using the toilet flush etc. (the left hand is reserved for cleansing oneself upon passing stool).
- 12) Do not touch your foot to anything sacred or use your foot to do something which can be done with one's hand.
- 13) Do not walk over books, devotees, prasada or any sacred articles. To touch someone with one's foot is considered offensive. For instance, if you have to walk past seated devotees in the temple room at class time, extend your right hand to indicate you wish to go by and they will move their knees to let you pass. If you happen to touch a devotee with your foot you can touch his body gently with your hand and then touch your hand to your head.
- 14) Books, beads, karatalas, etc. should not go on the ground or on one's seat or bed, nor should things be put on books (like alarm clocks, karatalas, etc.).
- 15) If a sacred object falls to the floor pick it up and touch it to your head.
- 16) If your Japa beads are out of your bag, keep them in a clean place but do not hang them on a hook.
- 17) Do not take sacred items into the stool room, e.g. beads, books, Harinam chuddar.
- 18) Do not take other's possessions thinking that everything is Krsna's and therefore everything is one. This is not our philosophy!
- 19) Do not sleep on your stomach. When sleeping try to face South-East.
- 20) Do not talk informally, read or write personal letters in front of the Deities -- only devotional activities such as hearing, chanting, reading and praying, or some important matter related to the service of the Deity should be carried on in the temple room.
- 21) While sitting do not expose your feet to the Deities or point them at the spiritual master, or Tulasi devi, etc. Always try to keep them covered.
- 22) Tilak should be applied in all 12 places after showering.
- 23) Single men and women should only converse together when it's necessary for particular devotional service.
- 24) Do not stand in one's underwear in front of Vaisnavas, or pictures of Krsna or the Guru. The Lord and His devotee are present in Their pictures and so should be respected accordingly.
- 25) Don't pass air in the temple room.
- 26) Try to avoid turning your back on, or sitting with your back to the Deities or Vyasasana.
- 27) Do not waste Krsna's energies such as toothpaste, electricity, water, etc. In fact, if you see a light or fire left on somewhere turn it off. Once on a morning walk, Srila Prabhupada turned off a running tap in someone's garden. Another time when he was in Mayapura he rose especially from his bed to chastise a disciple for leaving a fan on when she left a room for only 5 minutes.

Do not worry unduly about all these rules and regulations, soon they will be your second nature. We all make mistakes in the beginning.

Once in Vrindavana, Prabhupada noticed that some of his men disciples were letting their hair grow. Different men had their reasons for growing hair, so Prabhupada had no said anything,



but one day in the presence of his servant, Hari-sauri and Bhagavata dasa, Prabhupada expressed his displeasure.

Turning to Bhagavata dasa he said: ' You look very beautiful by keeping hairs. What is your explanation?

' Oh I was advised.' Said Bhagavata ' that because I was going to European countries it would be required to keep this hair."

' But they have won victory in the court by keeping a shaven head' , said Prabhupada, referring to a recent New York court case.

' I asked their advice' said Bhagavata, ' whether I should shave or keep the hair' . Bhagavata was about to say more, but Prabhupada interrupted him.

' What is this nonsense advice? Who is that rascal advice? By keeping hair, you become beautiful. This is without advice, this mentality of growing thick hair. We are known as shaven headed, the whole society.'

Hari-sauri attempted to explain his own case saying, ' It is about three weeks since I...' but Prabhupada interrupted him.

' Every fortnight, at least,' said Prabhupada, and then again he turned to Bhagavata ' Before going to Europe six years ago, you were keeping hairs like that. ' Oh, I have to go to Europe.' That I have seen. You like to keep\_hairs. That hippie mentality is going on.'

(Prabhupada Nectar, v. 1, p. 48-49)

## Chanting the Holy Names

The transcendental vibration established by the chanting of Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare, is the sublime method for reviving our transcendental consciousness. As living spiritual souls, we are all originally Krsna conscious entities, but due to our association with matter from time immemorial, our consciousness is now adulterated by the material atmosphere. The material atmosphere, in which we are now living, is called maya, or illusion. Maya means that which is not. And what is this illusion? The illusion is that we are all trying to be lords of material nature, while actually we are under the grip of her stringent laws. When a servant artificially tries to imitate the all-powerful master, it is called illusion. We are trying to exploit the resources of material nature, but actually we are becoming more and more entangled in her complexities. Therefore, although we are engaged in a hard struggle to conquer nature, we are ever more dependent on her. This illusory struggle against material nature can be stopped at once by revival of our eternal Krsna consciousness.

Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare is the transcendental process for reviving this original pure consciousness. By chanting this transcendental vibration, we can cleanse away all misgivings within our hearts. The basic principle of all such misgivings is the false consciousness that I am the lord of all I survey.



Krsna consciousness is not an artificial imposition on the mind. This consciousness is the original natural energy of the living entity. When we hear the transcendental vibration, this consciousness is revived. This simplest method of meditation is recommended for this age. By practical experience also, one can perceive that by chanting this maha-mantra, or the Great Chanting for Deliverance, one can at once feel a transcendental ecstasy coming through from the spiritual stratum. In the material concept of life we are busy in the matter of sense gratification as if we were in the lower animal stage. A little elevated from this status of sense gratification, one is engaged in mental speculation for the purpose of getting out of the material clutches. A little elevated from this speculative status, when one is intelligent enough, one tries to find out the supreme cause of all causes -- within and without. And when one is factually on the plane of spiritual understanding, surpassing the stages of sense, mind and intelligence, he is then on the transcendental plane. This chanting of the Hare Krsna mantra is enacted from the spiritual platform, and thus this sound vibration surpasses all lower strata of consciousness -- namely sensual, mental and intellectual. There is no need, therefore, to understand the language of the mantra, nor is there any need for mental speculation nor any intellectual adjustment for chanting this maha-mantra. It is automatic, from the spiritual platform, and as such, anyone can take part in vibrating this transcendental sound without any previous qualification. In a more advanced stage, of course, one is not expected to commit offenses on grounds of spiritual understanding.

In the beginning, there may not be the presence of all transcendental ecstasies, which are eight in number. These are: (1) Being stopped as though dumb, (2) perspiration, (3) standing up of hairs on the body, (4) dislocation of voice, (5) trembling, (6) fading of the body, (7) crying in ecstasy, and (8) trance. But there is no doubt that chanting for a while takes one immediately to the spiritual platform, and one shows the first symptom of this in the urge to dance along with the chanting of the mantra. We have seen this practically. Even a child can take part in the chanting and dancing. Of course, for one who is too entangled in material life, it takes a little more time to come to the standard point, but even such a materially engrossed man is raised to the spiritual platform very quickly. When it is chanted by a pure devotee of the Lord in love, it has the greatest efficacy on hearers, and as such this chanting should be heard from the lips of a pure devotee of the Lord, so that immediate effects can be achieved. As far as possible, chanting from the lips of nondevotees should be avoided. Milk touched by the lips of a serpent has poisonous effects.

The word Hara is the form of addressing the energy of the Lord, and the words Krsna and Rama are forms of addressing the Lord Himself. Both Krsna and Rama mean the supreme pleasure, and Hara is the supreme pleasure energy of the Lord, changed to Hare (Hah-ray) in the vocative. The supreme pleasure energy of the Lord helps us to reach the Lord.

The material energy, called maya, is also one of the multi-energies of the Lord. And we the living entities are also the energy, marginal energy, of the Lord. The living entities are described as superior to material energy. When the superior energy is in contact with the



inferior energy, an incompatible situation arises; but when the superior marginal energy is in contact with the superior energy, called Hara, it is established in its happy, normal condition.

These three words, namely Hara, Krsna and Rama, are the transcendental seeds of the maha-mantra. The chanting is a spiritual call for the Lord and His energy, to give protection to the conditioned soul. This chanting is exactly like the genuine cry of a child for its mother' s presence. Mother Hara helps the devotee achieve the Lord Father' s grace, and the Lord reveals Himself to the devotee who chants this mantra sincerely.

No other means of spiritual realization is as effective in this age of quarrel and hypocrisy as the maha-mantra: Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

(Vaisnava Songbook Srila Prabhupada pp. 12-15)

## The Ten Offenses

- (1) blaspheming a devotee of the Lord,
- (2) considering the Lord and the demigods on the same level or thinking that there are many gods,
- (3) neglecting the orders of the spiritual master,
- (4) minimizing the authority of the scriptures (the Vedas),
- (5) interpreting the holy names of God,
- (6) committing sins on the strength of chanting,
- (7) instructing the glories of the Lord's names to the unfaithful,
- (8) comparing the holy name with material piety,
- (9) being inattentive while chanting the holy name,
- (10) remaining attached to material things in spite of chanting the holy names.

## The Panca-tattva Maha-mantra

If one chants the exalted holy name of the Lord again and again and yet his love for the Supreme Lord does not develop and tears do not appear in his eyes, it is evident that because of his offenses in chanting, the seed of the holy name of Krsëa does not sprout.

But if one only chants, with some slight faith, the holy names of Lord Caitanya and Nityananda, very quickly he is cleansed of all offenses. Thus as soon as he chants the Hare Krsëa maha-mantra, he feels the ecstasy of love for God



## PURPORT

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura remarks in this connection that if one takes shelter of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda, follows Their instructions to become more tolerant than the tree and humbler than the grass, and in this way chants the holy name of the Lord, very soon he achieves the platform of transcendental loving service to the Lord, and tears appear in his eyes. There are offenses to be considered in chanting the Hare Krsna maha-mantra, but there are no such considerations in chanting the names of Gaura-Nityananda. Therefore, if one chants the Hare Krsna maha-mantra but his life is still full of sinful activities, it will be very difficult for him to achieve the platform of loving service to the Lord. But if in spite of being an offender one chants the holy names of Gaura-Nityananda, he is very quickly freed from the reactions to his offenses. Therefore, one should first approach Lord Caitanya and Nityananda, or worship Guru-Gauranga, and then come to the stage of worshiping Radha-Krsna.

It should be noted in this connection that the holy names of Lord Krsna and Gaurasundara are both identical with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore one should not consider one name to be more potent than the other. Considering the position of the people of this age, however, the chanting of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's name is more essential than the chanting of the Hare Krsna maha-mantra because Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is the most magnanimous incarnation and His mercy is very easily achieved. Therefore one must first take shelter of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu by chanting sri-krsna-caitanya prabhu-nityananda sri-advaita gadadhara srivasadi-gaura-bhakta-vrnda.

## Ekadasi

Sri Ekadasi comes twice each month, on the eleventh day of the waxing and the waning of the moon. "One who observes fasting on Ekadasi day is freed from all kinds of reactions to sinful activities and advances in pious life. The basic principle is not just to fast, but to increase one's faith and love for Govinda, or Krsna. The real reason for observing fasting on Ekadasi is to minimize the demands of the body and to engage our time in the service of the Lord by chanting or performing similar service. The best thing to do on fasting days is to remember the pastimes of Govinda and to hear His holy name constantly".

## Srimati Tulasi-devi

Tulasi-devi is Krsna's favorite plant. All the other plants and creepers in Vrindavana recognize Tulasi's exalted position as being very dear to Krsna. The leaves and manjaris are offered on the foodstuffs prepared for the Lord and also put on His lotus feet. It is stated that Krsna does not accept the offering unless Tulasi is present (when available).



Tulasi worship is so potent that simply by watering her or circumambulating her one burns up many grievous sins. By serving a Tulasi plant there is always auspiciousness and one always lives in the spiritual world. The Tulasi plant should be offered arati daily, and leaves should be picked only in the morning fore offering.

After the Tulasi plant leaves her body, the thicker trunk part is used for making japa beads and neck beads for the Vaisnavas. Tulasi devi is always serving Krsna and the devotees with her body, the perfection of a servant of Lord Krsna.

When the breeze carrying the aroma of tulasi leaves from the toes of the lotus feet of the Personality of Godhead entered the nostrils of those sages, they experienced a change both in body and in mind, even though they were attached to the impersonal Brahman understanding.

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It appears from this verse that the four Kumaras were impersonalists or protagonists of the philosophy of monism, becoming one with the Lord. But as soon as they saw the Lord's features, their minds changed. In other words, the impersonalist who feels transcendental pleasure in striving to become one with the Lord is defeated when he sees the beautiful transcendental features of the Lord. Because of the fragrance of His lotus feet, carried by the air and mixed with the aroma of tulasi, their minds changed; instead of becoming one with the Supreme Lord, they thought it wise to be devotees. Becoming a servitor of the lotus feet of the Lord is better than becoming one with the Lord.

(Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.15.43)